

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 10451

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EEC, GW

SUBJECT: SCHMIDT TALKS ABOUT EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE MISSION HAS JUST OBTAINED A COPY OF THE TRANSCRIPT OF A TWO-HOUR INTERVIEW GIVEN BY FRG CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT IN BONN ON OCTOBER 23 TO A GROUP OF BRUSSELS-BASED GERMAN CORRESPONDENTS. DURING THIS INTERVIEW SCHMIDT SPOKE AT LENGTH, AND WITH SOME CANDOR, ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE. HIS REMARKS FOCUSED ON THE FAILURE OF CURRENT EC INSTITUTIONS, THE FUTILITY OF SETTING TARGET DATES FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, THE NEED FOR THE EC MEMBER STATES TO GET AWAY FROM THE PURSUIT

OF THEIR NATIONAL INTERESTS AND ON THE GERMAN ROLE IN THE EC. HIS REMARKS ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW. END SUMMARY.

2. ON OCTOBER 23 FRG CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT GAVE A TWO-HOUR INTERVIEW IN BONN TO A GROUP OF BRUSSELS-BASED GERMAN CORRESPONDENTS. WE HAVE JUST OBTAINED A STENOGRAPHIC TRANSCRIPT OF THE INTERVIEW, WHICH WAS GIVEN ON A BACKGROUND BASIS. (ADDRESSEES ARE REQUESTED TO EXERCISE CAUTION SO AS NOT TO REVEAL THE FACT THAT WE ARE IN POSSESSION OF THIS FULL TRANSCRIPT.)

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3. FAILURE OF THE EXISTING EC INSTITUTIONS: DURING HIS BRIEFING, SCHMIDT TALKED AT LENGTH WITH THE JOURNALISTS ABOUT THE FAILURE OF THE EXISTING EC INSTITUTIONS. HE WAS CRITICAL OF THE COMMISSION AND ITS PRESENT MAKEUP SAYING THAT HE THOUGHT IT MUST BE FORMED DIFFERENTLY AND THAT THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE EC MEMBER STATES MUST CHOOSE A COMMISSION PRESIDENT WITHOUT REGARD TO COALITION BUILDING OR DOMESTIC POLITICS. SAYING THAT THE COMMISSION PRESIDENT "MUST STAND IN THE FIRST RANK POLITICALLY," SCHMIDT ARGUED THAT HE (THE COMMISSION PRESIDENT) MUST HAVE CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE ON THE SELECTION OF THE OTHER COMMISSION MEMBERS. " IN NO COUNTRY IN THE WORLD IS A GOVERNMENT COMPOSED OF SUCH

DIVERSE FACTORS, IN THE PAST SEVENTEEN YEARS" SCHMIDT CONTINUED, "THERE WAS HARDLY EVER A FIRST RATE POLITICIAN AMONG THEM (YET IT) CALLS ITSELF THE COMMISSION (AND) PUTS ITSELF FORWARD AS A EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT."

4. SCHMIDT CRITICIZES THE COUNCIL EVEN MORE STRONGLY: "...I FIND THAT THE COUNCILS OF MINISTERS IN THE LAST YEARS HAVE BEEN MORE GUILTY OF ERRORS AND MISTAKES THAN THE SUCCESSIVE COMMISSIONS." SCHMIDT SAID HE WOULD BE QUITE HAPPY TO "FOREGO" ALL COUNCILS OTHER THAN THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL, NOTING THAT THE LATTER GROUP IS "RELATIVELY THE MOST INDEPENDENT" AND THAT "FOREIGN MINISTERS AS A RULE ARE LESS EXPOSED IN THEIR CAPITALS TO PRESSURES FROM LOBBIES." COUNCILS ATTENDED BY OTHER MINISTERS, ARE OF LITTLE UTILITY, SAYS SCHMIDT, NOTING THESE MINISTERS "CAN DO NOTHING, THEY ARE TECHNICIANS."

5. TARGET DATES FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION: SCHMIDT, WHILE ASSERTING HE STILL THINKS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION CAN BE ACHIEVED, SAYS THAT THIS WILL NOT TAKE PLACE "TOMORROW OR NEXT YEAR OR EVEN BY 1980." HE VIEWS THE "BRILLIANT AIMS FOR THE YEAR 1980" AS "EUROPEAN ILLUSIONISM" AND FEELS HE AND GISCARD "HAVE DONE MORE FOR THE SETTING UP OF AN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION THAN MANY OTHERS WHO TALK MUCH ABOUT THESE MATTERS." SCHMIDT NOTES THAT "EVEN TODAY THERE EXISTS IN GERMANY A RELATIVELY LARGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS OF INTEGRATION AND THE REAL POSSIBILITIES, THAT IS WITH REGARD TO THE SLOW PACE IN ACTUAL TERMS." "GERMANY AND HOLLAND ARE THE TWO COUNTRIES IN WHICH EUROPEAN IDEOLOGY IS RUNNING AT THE GREATEST DISTANCE AHEAD OF REALITY."

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6. COMPROMISING NATIONAL INTERESTS: SCHMIDT SAYS THAT PROGRESS TOWARD EUROPEAN UNIFICATION WILL NOT COME THROUGH THE NUMEROUS REGULATIONS PASSED EVERY YEAR BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND THE COMMISSION, NOR THROUGH THE NUMEROUS EC COUNCIL MEETINGS, BUT RATHER BY STATESMEN AND POLITICIANS WHO "IMPLEMENT AT HOME WHAT THEY HAVE SUBSCRIBED TO IN BRUSSELS OR ELSEWHERE AND WHO DO NOT CONSIDER THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS PRIMARILY AS A PLACE WHERE

NATIONAL INTERESTS ARE BEING HORSE TRADED."

7. AS EXAMPLES OF POLICIES WHICH, IF PROPERLY PURSUED, WOULD HAVE A BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE ON THE CREATION OF EUROPE BUT WHICH ARE NOW BEING MISUSED IN THE PURSUIT OF NATIONAL INTERESTS, SCHMIDT CITES THE REGIONAL FUND AND THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY. HE TERMS THE REGIONAL FUND "NOTHING MORE THAN A NEW MECHANISM FOR HORIZONTAL FINANCIAL EQUALIZATION UNDER A BATHING COSTUME--A BATHING COSTUME MARKED REGIONAL POLICY." HE RHETORICALLY ASKED HIS QUESTIONER TO POINT TO "WHAT IMPROVEMENTS IT WILL BRING TO THE REGIONAL STRUCTURES IN SCOTLAND OR IN SICILY." HIS ANSWER: "NOTHING* NOBODY IS COMPELLED TO SPEND THE MONEY HE GETS FOR REAL REGIONAL POLICY ENDS."

8. SCHMIDT'S ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY IS LITTLE DIFFERENT: "ONE CANNOT DETECT ANY SORT OF BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE OF THE AGRICULTURAL POLICY ON THE ITALIAN AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURE, SAY IN THE MEZZOGIORNO...NOBODY WHO GETS MONEY UNDER THE AGRICULTURAL POLICY IS COMPELLED TO SPEND IT FOR THE MODIFICATION OF AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES IN THE DIRECTION OF EQUALIZATION OR NEAR-EQUALIZATION OF LIVING CONDITIONS. ON THE CONTRARY,... THESE FINANCIAL RESOURCES ARE OFTEN USED FOR THE CONSERVATION OF EXISTING STRUCTURES, NOT FOR THEIR ALTERATION." SUMMING UP ON THE PURSUIT OF NATIONAL INTERESTS, SCHMIDT SAYS: "THAT IS WHAT RENDERS ME SOMETIMES SKEPTICAL. ONE SEES HOW NINE NATIONAL BUREAUCRACIES, A EURO-BUREAUCRACY, AND IN RECENT TIMES A COUNCIL BUREAUCRACY...CONSTANTLY TAMPER WITH THOSE THINGS WHICH THEY CONSIDER TO BE POLITICALLY IMPORTANT AND FAIL TO KEEP THEIR EYES ON THE REAL GOALS."

9. THE GERMAN ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY: ASKED IF HIS STATEMENTS ON EUROPE MEAN HE IS SEEKING A WIDER ROLE FOR GERMANY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, SCHMIDT RESPONDED "I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE FEDERAL

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REPUBLIC, NO MATTER WHO SITS AT THIS TABLE, COULD EXERCISE THIS ROLE IN THE LONG RUN, AND THEREFORE, IT SHOULD NOT STRIVE AFTER (A LEADERSHIP ROLE). IT WOULD BE BEST IF WHATEVER LEADERSHIP MATERIALIZES IN EUROPE OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS EMANATED FROM THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL...THE GERMANS SHOULD AVOID GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY STRIVE AFTER A LEADERSHIP ROLE. THEY ARE VERY STRONG, IN THE JUDGMENT OF OTHERS, AS FAR AS THEIR ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND THEIR DOMESTIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES ARE CONCERNED. (BUT) THEY SHOULD EXERCISE RESERVE."

10. COMMENT: AS AN EXPRESSION OF SCHMIDT'S VIEWS ON HOW TO ACHIEVE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, THE INTERVIEW IS THIN ON SPECIFICS-- BEYOND POINTING OUT THAT STRONG LEADERSHIP AT THE TOP OF THE COMMISSION AND FROM HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AND FOREIGN MINISTERS IN EC COUNCILS MAY HELP. IT IS THUS MORE OF A DIAGNOSIS THAN A

PRESCRIPTION FOR WHAT AILS THE EC. AS A DIAGNOSIS, IT IS NOT
FAR OFF THE MARK. MORRIS

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